

## Custom and Tradition of Noruz Festival in Central Asian Countries

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### ABSTRACT

There are some days in every nation and race which has historical and cultural backgrounds and even in some cases they are rooted from religious and holy beliefs. Also, these matters will represent cultural and historical identities of a nation.

One of these days is related to solar year and despite various national and racial tastes, it is one of the most common global traditions in some Central Asian countries such as Iran, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Turkey, etc. There are just few civilizations that lack this festival. Noruz has been a new year's festival in Central Asian countries and a national festival for Arian for many years. Also, it was common that this festival was commemorated among Turkish of Central Asia i.e. Uzbeks, Kazakhs and Turkmen. This study is going to investigate Gahanbar of Noruz, appellation, ancient roots and social custom and traditions related to this festival commemoration in various countries of Central Asia.

**KEY WORDS:** Noruz Festival, Gahanbar Calendar, Customs and Traditions and Central Asian Countries.

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### INTRODUCTION

Festival and exhilaration are necessities of a healthy and hopeful person. Noruz is one of the oldest festivals remained from ancient times of Iran. It is commemorated in early spring. On the basis of Republic Azerbaijan's proposition, in 23 February 2010, UN General Assembly officially recognized 21 March as international day of Noruz that originates from Iranian roots. The first international Noruz festival was held in Tehran in 27 March 2010 and this city was recognized as secretariat of Noruz [1].

Noruz festival starts with spring equinox. According to astronomy, vernal equinox of northern hemisphere is a moment that sun passes equator and goes to the north of the earth. This moment is called the first moment of ram and equals the first day of Hormoz or Oormazd day of Farvardin month in Hegira-solar calendar [3].

Etymologically, festival is derived from "Yaz" or Yasan in Avestan language, "Yadj" in Sanskrit, "yad" in old Foros and "Yatin" in Pahlavi. Therefore, festival (expressing exhilaration) expression of today's was mentioned a ceremony with religious roots in old times. In fact, Noruz has been a festival of praising and worshipping God in exhilaration [4].

Noruz in Iran and Afghanistan that have Hegira-solar calendar, is the first day of new year. But in Central Asian countries and Caucasus which have Anno Domini calendar, is celebrated as the start of spring. We are going to investigate some customs and traditions of Noruz in some countries of Central Asia [5].

#### Noruz in Uzbekistan

Noruz is a public festival in Uzbekistan but European calendar is officially utilized. People will clean their houses, decorate houses, villages and cities and buy new clothes before Noruz. They spread especial cloth with various and delicious foods which is called "Dastar Khan". Cooking Samanu is one of the ancient customs of Uzbek with singing, dancing and telling myths [6].

#### Noruz in Afghanistan

Noruz has encountered many onerous and cultural conflicts, long-term dominance and onslaught of foreigners along the time. But, Noruz is held in an expected glorious way now. The flag related to the first Imam of the Shia will be raised in the morning of Noruz first day and then this festival will be started officially and will be continued up to 40 days. Some tradition and custom of Noruz in Balkh are washing and cleaning carpets and houses, dust removing, doing some activities such as Bozkashi, camel fights, camel riding and their especial wrestling [7].

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### **Noruz in the Republic of Azerbaijan**

There is no country such as Azerbaijan that commemorates Noruz. Muslim mufti congratulates Noruz to Azeri and hopes them happiness, health and welfare. Some of customs related to Noruz on the basis of people believes are singing, preparing necessary materials of especial cloth, preparing riddles, sending Samanu, hanging up sheepskin hats on doors and bags from roof holes on eve in order to receive Noruz gift [8].

### **Noruz in Pakistan**

Noruz is called as a new day that lightens the world. Some common tradition of Noruz among Pakistani are cleaning houses, wearing new clothes, cooking traditional sweets and foods, giving and receiving gift, visit and return visit, singing in Urdu, Dari and Arabic [9].

### **Noruz in Tajikistan**

Tajiks commemorate Noruz widely in the whole country. The year will be started by president congratulation to people. Some races of traditional, sport and singing will be hold. All the people come to streets in order to have fun. Noruz is an ancient festival for Tajiks especially for Khashanian. They call this day "KhadirAyam" i.e. a live and friendship day of all the creatures [8].

### **Noruz in Turkmenistan**

Noruz is celebrated twice in Turkmenistan on the bases of traditional and modern customs. One of these festivals is the modern one is based on Anno Domini calendar verified by UN and the other is based on traditional customs in order to represent revival of ancient custom and tradition of Tajik. The people will clean houses and yards, pay debts, cooking breads and piroshkies of wheat, millet, bean, split pea, lentil, rice, sesame and pea. The most common cooking of Noruz is Samanu for Turkmen [10].

### **Noruz in Turkey**

Noruz was common till the first years of Republicanizing Turkey but then, it lost the previous significance and Noruz is commemorating in some Kurdish and Northern parts. Nowadays, Noruz is formally celebrated in its holiday because of Kurdish efforts of this region[7].

### **Noruz in Kyrgyzstan**

Noruz is just one or two first days of Farvardin month in Kyrgyzstan. Some traditions of this region in Noruz are celebration and riding races that are widely performed all over. Kyrgyz people will cook traditional foods like BeshBarmagh, ManteBersek and Katma and they will distribute freely these foods among participants of festival[5].

### **Noruz in Kazakhstan**

Kazakh people call Noruz as vernal equinox. They believe in that stars will reach their primary points in this day and everything would be changed into exhilaration and new. They will lighten 2 candles on the roof in eve. Also they believe that if the house is cleaned in Noruz, its inhabitants would not be sick or unfortunate. Noruz is hold very sacred for Kazakh. They will expect a happy year in the case that it rain or snow this day[11].

### **Conclusion**

Noruz is one of significant and culturally accepted ceremonies which is of a interrelationship reasons among liberal people. Noruz festival means supporting intellectualism against obscurantism. Its main message is spreading cooperation, rapport, friendship and hopefulness. Noruz is a historical fact, permanent celebration, reconciliation and jubilation custom.

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